ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An object of the present invention is to improve fuel economy by means of lean combustion, and in particular to improve fuel economy on a low load side and during idling. Burned gas discharged from an exhaust stroke side preceding cylinder of a pair of cylinders having an overlapping exhaust stroke and intake stroke is introduced as is into an intake stroke side following cylinder through an intercylinder gas channel, and only the gas which is discharged from the following cylinder is led into an exhaust passage. Particularly during low loads and idling, combustion is performed in the preceding cylinder at an ultra-lean air-fuel ratio of at least three times the stoichiometric air-fuel ratio, and in the following cylinder, combustion is performed by spark ignition at a substantially stoichiometric air-fuel ratio by feeding fuel to the burned gas introduced from the preceding cylinder. In the following cylinder, combustion is performed through compression ignition in accordance with increases in the load.